

**BOARD OF TRUSTEES
SUFFOLK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS,
RECREATION AND CONSERVATION
MINUTES OF JUNE 27, 2019
WEST HILLS COUNTY PARK
MELVILLE, NEW YORK**

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Christopher Bodkin	Member of the Board
Gilbert Cardillo	Trustee, Town of Riverhead
Kathleen Gooding	Trustee, Town of Shelter Island
Dawn Hopkins	Trustee, Town of Brookhaven
Joseph Kukral	Member at Large
Peter Leis	Chairman, Trustee, Town of Islip
William B. Sickles	Vice Chairman, Trustee, Town of Southampton
Richard F. White, Jr.	Trustee, Town of East Hampton
James W. Wright	Trustee, Town of Huntington

ABSENT

Debra Kolyer	Member of the Board
Daniel Lloyd	Trustee, Town of Babylon
Michael Rosato	Trustee, Town of Smithtown
VACANT	Trustee, Town of Southold

PARKS DEPARTMENT

Philip Berdolt	Commissioner
Don McKay	Deputy Commissioner
Nick Gibbons	Principal Environmental Analyst
Emily Lauri	Community Relations Director
Terry Maccarrone	Coordinator of Community Based Programs
Tony Trotta	Senior Superintendent
Barbara Rittman	Senior Office Assistant

GUESTS

Alexandra DeRosa	Aide, Hon. Legislator Kara Hahn, District 5
Matthew Okrent	Page Intern, Hon. Legislator Kara Hahn, District 5

PUBLIC PORTION

There were no members of the public present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 23, 2019

A motion to approve the minutes was made by Trustee Richard White and it was seconded by Trustee William Sickles. The minutes were unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT

Commissioner Berdolt reported that the Parks Department was approached by Dr. Gaynell Stone who runs a Native Life program at Blydenburgh CP and also ran an Indian Village restoration program through the Town of Smithtown at Hoyt Farm until just recently. There were some concerns about a structure that would be needed to cook under if the Hoyt Farm program were to be moved over to Blydenburgh CP. Commissioner Berdolt stated that it was decided that Gardiner CP would be a more suitable fit for this program because there is a meeting room, an outside pavilion that has cover, barbecue pits and picnic tables that can be utilized. The Parks Department has determined that the structure should not be moved to Blydenburgh CP because it doesn't conform to the historical nature of that particular park property.

Commissioner Berdolt reported that with a \$100,000 grant from Senator Boyle, the Parks Department was able to build a dog park at Gardiner CP and it has almost been completed. There is a fenced-in area for dogs to be off-leash, and an agility course was built for the dogs as well.

Commissioner Berdolt reported that a new playground will be built at Smith Point CP. Parks has a \$100,000 grant from Economic Development/HUD and the equipment was purchased from those funds. The installation will be covered with Parks capital money. It is hoped that the playground installation will start in the next two weeks.

Parks Trustee and representative for the Town of Southold, Arthur W. Leudesdorf has been unable to attend several meetings due to his current work demands and has resigned. The Town Supervisor has been notified and will nominate a new representative to the Presiding Officer when a decision has been made.

Work for the sprinkler system at Third House has been approved and paperwork was sent to the contractor to begin the job.

Since piping plover season began, it has been very busy in Southampton. Parks has had to close down some camping sites at Shinnecock East CP. Campsites 103-85 on the ocean side for outer beach camping have been affected by the plovers on the Southampton side. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines state that vehicles and traffic have to be 1000 meters (3,000 feet) away from the birds once they hatch. Parks created a beach management plan that was accepted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service which will allow for 200 meters from the birds once they hatch. The birds are being monitored from sun-up to sun-down at Shinnecock to make certain that they stay on the Southampton side where they are now totally closed down to vehicle traffic. Commissioner Berdolt stated that he is very pleased with staff efforts, the quick turnaround with the beach management plan and Service's positive response.

Nick Gibbons added that any campsites on the beach that have been closed have been relocated to the bayside where there is enough space to double up campsites. If the birds migrate west, there will be no alternative and there won't be enough room to accommodate all of the campers. Commissioner Berdolt stated that campers were given plenty of advanced notice and also given various alternatives. Patrons could keep their reservation as they are, and also make another reservation somewhere else just in case. If the birds don't hatch, they can revert back to their original site. Another option would be to get a full refund which would take 2-4 weeks to re-process with the credit card company. Another option would be to take a refund and attach it to their Green Key account to be used in the future.

The management plan saves the rest of the beach which includes another 44 campsites on the ocean side, and those reservations are currently not being affected. The other sites have been closed down. On the bay side at campsites 1-33, there is plenty of additional room near the jetties for the campers who were displaced.

At Smith Point CP there are currently 31 nesting pairs which surpasses the last record by quite a bit. The beach is still open, but not to full capacity.

Vice Chairman Sickles stated that he doesn't feel that enough credit is given to the staff who are doing all of the work. He commented that aside from the plover monitoring, park employees are cooperating with the plover monitors to make sure everything happens at each park level, most especially at Smith Point and Shinnecock CPs. He gave credit to Nick Gibbons and his crew, Diana Lynch, Christine Boelke and all of the stewards. Nick added that the park staff working at Smith Point, Cupsogue and Shinnecock CPs have been very accommodating and supportive.

Commissioner Berdolt reported that the Parks Department finally received funds in the budget for the food service station at Peconic Dunes CP. The total amount was originally supposed to be \$1.4 million but ended up at only \$950,000. Terry Maccarrone stated that instead of Parks receiving the \$1.4 million that was needed, getting the funds was advanced sooner but the amount was cut by \$350,000. The building project will have to move forward at the lower amount.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Chairman Leis inquired if there are any updates on cell towers in county parks. Commissioner Berdolt stated that the installation at the GATR site in Montauk is finally moving forward which is a real public safety issue on the East End. Trustee White commented that it will be very much appreciated by the community.

Chairman Leis inquired if there are any updates on work at the Third House and Commissioner Berdolt stated that the contract for the sprinkler system has been signed.

Trustee White reported that the group that has been raising bobwhite quail is hoping to do a release at the September Parks Trustee meeting. He added that they have located a nest with birds that were banded from one of their releases. They are also keeping some of the eggs aside so that they can get a hatch from some of the birds that they banded. In five years, the group would also like to begin raising ruffed grouse. Bobwhite quail is not a native bird to the area but ruffed grouse is, so that is being considered for the future.

Chairman Leis inquired about how business is going with the concessions. Commissioner Berdolt stated that they are doing well. The month of May brought in double the amount from last year. Golf is also doing well with the nice weather. Trustee Cardillo inquired about how the Glamping is doing. Commissioner Berdolt reported that it opened on Memorial Day weekend and had sixteen reservations. The mosquitoes have been an issue but Vector Control will be making some stops out there and there will be helicopter spreading as well. Trustee Gooding reported that she visited the Glamping site and found it to be very interesting. Trustee Sickles also visited the site on the Tuesday after Memorial Day and took some photos which he passed around at the meeting. He stated that there were three rows of tents set up. The tents closest to the water are \$500/night, the second row is \$400/night and third row back are \$300/night. There is one large port-o-lav unit with three cubicles on each side containing a toilet, sink and a shower. The relaxation area has a small gazebo type structure to sit under, a fire pit, and a grill and table where the cooking is done. A tent is set up to have meals in, and there are also paddle boards and kayaks available for guests who are interested. The platforms are all made with treated lumber and up on blocks with the tents set up on them. Some complaints have been raised about the elimination of the ball field that some of the campers liked to use during their stay. Commissioner Berdolt stated there is enough property there to create another ball field if enough interest is shown.

Trustee Gooding inquired about the possibility of the Glamping concession taking over the camp store that was being considered. Commissioner Berdolt reported that the Parks Department just got approval for them to

occupy the store for storage purposes at the present time. The Parks Department will go before the waiver committee to obtain a waiver on the RFP requirement in order to enter into a contract with them. If this can be achieved before the end of the season, the concessionaire would be able to open the store and make it operational for campers this year.

Chairman Leis inquired about the current status of the dumping issue that occurred at West Hills CP. Commissioner Berdolt reported that the new concessionaire has been doing a great job with the stables even though there is no electric yet. The wires were cut during excavation and it has not yet been restored. PSEG wants an Underwriters certificate and there are still some holes left on the site. The remediation is finished but the restoration has not yet been completed. Trees and shrubs have been delivered and they will be planted on Saturday. The remaining holes will be filled in and then the parking lot will be scheduled for paving. Commissioner Berdolt stated that the new concessionaires been doing a wonderful job with the site in the meantime. They took the barn that houses the horses and created fewer stalls in order to provide watering troughs for the horses that won't freeze during the cold winter months. Commissioner Berdolt passed photos of the progress that has been made thus far.

ROUND TABLE

Trustee White reported that he was asked about PSEG putting a substation in county park property and inquired if it was Ecker CP. Trustee Gooding and Nick stated that PSEG agreed to move the site to another location that isn't on county property.

Trustee Gooding inquired about the status of work plans for the Cedar Point Lighthouse roof and if funds were approved to get the job done. Commissioner Berdolt reported that he met with Mike Leahy whose group is quite anxious to get the work completed. The county received \$400,000 for the job and approximately \$100,000 of it was spent to get the planning completed. A company who was renowned for doing lighthouses came and did the laser imaging. Everything on the inside was found to be no good and the structure was also leaning so it needed scaffolding on the interior to secure it enough to actually start the work. The pricing that was quoted to straighten the structure was not acceptable. However, it could be left the way it is as long as it is made to be structurally sound. The subcontractor who does the scaffolding wanted a guarantee to be paid within 30 days which wasn't possible so he backed out. At present, there is nobody who will take the scaffolding/stabilization work. Other possibilities are being considered.

Trustee Gil Cardillo commented that in 1987 Parks had a ¼% drinking water tax which was used to buy parkland for many years. He stated that he was unaware that in 2011, the Suffolk County Legislature took \$29 million out of that fund. The court has now ruled that the funds have to be returned. Trustee Cardillo commented that the Parks Trustees should have been made aware of it if funds were going to be taken from the provision. Commissioner Berdolt stated that not all of that money goes for the purchase of land, and that a lot of it goes toward water quality improvement projects and land preservation across the county.

Nick Gibbons reported that there are three pairs of plovers at Cedar Point CP and that this year is the first year in a long time that there is a pair at Northwest Harbor.

Member at Large Joe Kukral reported that he looked into some of the Facebook posts made by campers and the annual issue of piping plovers nesting in the county parks. He reported that most of the posts expressed that they were glad that the Parks Department was doing something about it and offering alternatives.

Member at Large Kukral stated that he spoke with Frank from LIBBA regarding some air hose complaints that were also posted. He was advised that LIBBA provides beach cleanups at the beginning of every summer season and puts air hoses out, but the big problem is that people steal the air hoses right off of the air stations.

Commissioner Berdolt commented that the air hoses closest to the East booth don't normally get stolen. The air hoses are within eye sight range so this is a deterrent.

Member at Large Kukral inquired if the dump station issue at Shinnecock has been looked into. Commissioner Berdolt stated that DPW inspected it and Parks is getting the annual contractor to check it out to see if it's something they can fix under the regular contract so it doesn't have to go out to bid.

Trustee Wright reported that he is scheduled to visit a property on Pulaski Road in East Northport which was formerly a feed and grain store. The property has apparently been submitted for potential acquisition by the Town of Huntington.

Member of the Board Chris Bodkin reported that the Fish and Wildlife Service updated its ruling regarding regulations for managing resident Canada goose populations. The removal of date restrictions on nest and egg destruction was determined. Some Canada geese are already nesting in February in southern states, and it seems likely that nest initiation dates will also advance into February in mid-latitude and perhaps northern states in the future and hatching of nests may occur later than June 30. The original regulation allowed for destruction of Canada goose nests and eggs by authorized personnel between March 1 and June 30 only.

Trustee Dawn Hopkins inquired about the current status of southern pine beetle work ongoing in county parkland. Nick reported that there are currently DEC and state crews working in the Hampton Bays/Flanders area and also a pocket area in Westhampton.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Parks Trustee Richard White and it was seconded by Parks Commissioner Philip Berdolt. The motion was unanimously approved by a vote of 9-0-0.

The next Parks Trustee meeting will be held at Blydenburgh County Park in Smithtown on Thursday, July 25, 2019.